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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR BARRETT MEETS WITH FINNISH STATE
SECRETARY VOLANEN

Classified By: Ambassador Barbara Barrett for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (SBU) During Ambassador Barrett's June 13 courtesy call on Risto Volanen, State Secretary in the Prime Minister's Office, Volanen explained his duties as Chief-of-Staff for the Prime Minister. He invited Ambassador Barrett to bring issues to his attention that require emphasis or demand immediate attention. Volanen also described his role as structural coordinator of Finland's crisis management system. The Ambassador expressed appreciation for the Embassy's relationship with his office and for Finland's efforts as a counterterrorism partner. They agreed that the strong bilateral relationship is a well established tradition, and in Volanen's words, easy to continue, difficult to make better.

¶2. (C) Volanen described the US-NATO presence as a "stabilizing factor" in the Baltic. He stated that there have been no successful concrete terrorist efforts in Finland; the GOF is aware of and have not underestimated the problem. Volanen deferred deeper OSCE discussions and climate and energy discussions to their respective ministers, but noted that the Prime Minister is personally interested in climate issues and has had the ministers study fundamentals in special sessions so that they understand the technically and economically complicated underlying facts. Ambassador Barrett raised the current pharmaceutical patent issue within the context of intellectual property rights, innovation, technology and the recent Millennium Prize awarded in Finland. Volanen replied that the Prime Minister had taken it under consideration, that he had "no news" but would find out where it stood. (During a June 18 discussion with the DCM, Volanen said that he had no authority to address our concerns, but that he "had gotten" the Ambassador's message.)

¶3. (C) Comment: Volanen serves as the prime minister's gatekeeper but is rarely in the public eye. He noted that he is politically tied to the fate of Prime Minister Vanhanen. The remark on the US-NATO presence in the Baltic is unchanged from a February 2005 Volanen remark quoted as part of a Helsingin Sanomat commentary, a commentary which suggested that Finland was a "NATO stowaway". End comment.

BARRETT